

Commander spotlight



Col Tom Deppe, 341st Space Wing commander, passes the squadron guidon to Maj Brian S. Melton, 341st Comptroller Squadron commander.

Photo by MSgt Michael Hertiges

Comptroller Squadron commander

College: Brigham Young University, bachelor's (international relations); Indiana University, master's (finance); Wright State University, master's (logistics management.)

Last assignment: Satellite System Program branch chief, Air Force Cost Analysis Agency, Arlington, Va.

Leadership philosophy: Provide all the tools, training and mentoring each team member needs. Point them in the right direction. Give them your full support and trust. Then watch them perform.

Goals for the organization: Provide outstanding financial support and advice to each Air Force member and organization in support of the wing commander's goals.

DOD slows anthrax vaccination program again

By Jim Garamone
American Forces Press Service

WASHINGTON (AFP) — The Department of Defense is further curtailing the anthrax immunization program due to inadequate supplies of the vaccine, DOD officials said Monday.

Effective immediately only servicemembers assigned to "special mission units" will receive the six-shot series.

The action is necessary because of delays in DOD receiving Food and Drug Administration-approved vaccine from Bioport Corp., the sole source of the vaccine.

The FDA is expected to approve Bioport, based in Lansing, Mich., for full production by March, said Marine Maj Gen Randall West, special assistant to the deputy secretary of defense for chemical and biological protection.

"We have not yet been able to re-establish the supply of certified safe and effective vaccine to continue the program on the schedule," Maj Gen West said.

The contractor is working to achieve FDA

approval of their new expanded manufacturing facility as soon as possible, he said. There are currently about 30,000 doses of vaccine available for use now.

But until then, DOD will conserve the dwindling supply of approved vaccine. Only small special operations units, people working on research and some congressionally mandated studies will continue to receive the vaccine, Maj Gen West said.

This is the third slowdown for the immunization program. In December 1999, DOD stopped inoculating servicemembers other than those deploying to Korea and the Persian Gulf. In November, DOD stopped inoculating servicemembers bound for Korea. Now servicemembers deploying to Southwest Asia will stop receiving the vaccine.

"I wish we had vaccine available to continue the protocols and to continue vaccinating all of our people deploying there," Maj Gen West said.

About 13,000 U.S. servicemembers are deployed to Southwest Asia. DOD and U.S. Central Command will have sufficient antibiotics on hand for post-exposure treatment in case of an attack.

